

# Destress the Holidays

The holidays are the best and worst of times. Holiday shopping, travel arrangements, family demands, wrapping gifts, continuous rain or snow, and entertaining can all add up to the holiday blues! Here are some helpful tips to ensure that you get the best of the holidays and that the holidays don't get the best of you.

1. **Don't let perfection spoil the party.** Fussing over details usually backfires, spoiling the fun not just for the one worrying but also for everyone around the hysterical person. People are coming to the party for the good company; they do not care if things are perfect!
2. **Stretch out the season.** If December is too busy, consider scheduling your holiday party for mid-January. By then, guests actually welcome the idea of a party and you will have plenty of time to get ready.
3. **Delegate duties.** If you are a holiday perfectionist, try to reduce your stress by asking for help and delegating some of the responsibilities. You will be pleasantly surprised that others don't mind helping out.
4. **Don't shop until you drop.** Spend only what you can afford! Excess spending leads to excess debt which leads to increased stress in the New Year. Start shopping earlier and allow yourself to buy gifts before the season begins.
5. **Prioritize.** Make a list of all the things that are important to you and then talk with your family to see what is important to them. Once you find out what really matters to your family/friends you can let go of the rest and focus on what really matters.
6. **Plan ahead.** A great way to lower holiday stress is to do things ahead of time. The more you can do before the holidays, the less chance that everything will come up at the end causing increased stress.
7. **Don't go it alone.** Many people suffer from stress because they face the holidays alone. Connect with your family and friends and plan great get-togethers for everyone to enjoy.
8. **Don't forget diet & exercise.** Travel, family gatherings, and stress can disrupt your daily schedule. Remember that diet and exercise are extremely important to your health and at the same time are great tools to reduce stress.
9. **Take time for yourself.** The holidays are a time for family and friends. If you need a break from too much togetherness, that is ok. Take a quiet walk, get some exercise, practice deep breathing or take a long bath... all great ways to reduce your stress.
10. **Just say "No".** Learn to say "no". When faced with unexpected, unwanted requests that will only provide you with increased stress it is ok to say "no" and not take on someone else's problems.

Remember... Don't Sweat the Small Stuff!  
Life is too short, enjoy everyday with a smile!

## Wellness Tip

Engage in stress management activities:

- Meditate
- Listen to soothing music
- Take a bath
- Get a massage

## Nutrition Tip

**Excess stress can lead to eating the wrong foods. Skipping meals and mindless munching will only add to your stress.**

For more information on nutrition contact the University Dietitian, Doreen Kordorsky at [kordorskyd1@southernct.edu](mailto:kordorskyd1@southernct.edu) or 392-6309.

## Fitness Tip

**Stretching is a wonderful way to relieve tension.**

**Try walking for a few minutes to warm up the body and then take a moment to hold a few stretches courtesy of [sparkpeople.com](http://sparkpeople.com)**

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